

NAME: Matsumoto, Shintaro DATE OF BIRTH: 1899 PLACE OF BIRTH: Hiroshima  
Age: 78 Sex: M Marital Status: W Education: Grammar school

## PRE-WAR:

Date of arrival in U.S.: 1913 Age: 14 M.S. Y.Y. Port of entry: San Fran.  
Occupation/s: 1. Schoolboy 2. Farm laborer 3. Poultry business  
Place of residence: 1. Sebastopol 2. All over 3. Calif 4. Sebastopol  
Religious affiliation: Buddhist church  
Community organizations/activities: Apple drying business

## EVACUATION:

Name of assembly center: Merced  
Name of relocation center: Amache, Colorado  
Dispensation of property: Left everything with neighbor.  
Jobs held in camp: 1. Kitchen helper 2. Garbage collector 3. Policeman  
Jobs held outside of camp: \_\_\_\_\_  
Left camp to go to: Seabrook, New Jersey

## POST-WAR:

Date returned to West Coast: Fall '45  
Address/es: 1. Sebastopol 2. Santa Rosa 3. San Diego  
Occupation/s: 1. Apple dryer 2. Gardener  
Religious affiliation: Buddhist church  
Activities: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of interviewer: Takarabe Date: 10/23/77 Place: San Diego, Ca.

Translator Mabel Hall



T: Please tell me your name first.

M: My Japanese name is Shintaro Matsumoto.

Q: Do you have an American name?

A: My American name is Frank.

Q: When were you born?

A: I was born on January 25, 1899.

Q: Are you 78 years old now?

A: Yes, I am.

Q: Where were you born?

A: In Hiroshima Prefecture.

Q: What kind of a family are you from?

A: It was a farm household.

Q: Was it a big farm?

A: No, it was a small farm. My father was in America, so I was brought up by my grandmother.

Q: Were both your parents in America?

A: My mother died when I was little, and I came here when I was 13 years and 9 months old summoned by my father.



Q: Were you raised by your grandparents when you were little?

A: My grandfather was not alive, just grandmother was. She died when I was about 10 years old, so I was brought up by my aunt until I came to America.

Q: How old were you when your father came to America?

A: He went to Hawaii when I was about 2 years old, and came to America from Hawaii.

Q: Then you didn't remember him, didn't you?

A: No, I didn't remember him at all.

Q: What do you remember about your childhood days with your grandmother?

A: I don't remember much, but I lived happily until my grandmother passed away. I went to school.

Q: Weren't you lonely?

A: I was used to that kind of life, so I didn't feel particularly lonely, but after grandmother died I had a hard time..

Q: Were you afraid of giving trouble?

A: Yes, as my aunt had about 3 children of her own. She made me help farming and help around the house after school.



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Q: How much schooling did you have?

A: I was in the second year of junior highschool when Emperor Meiji died. That year my passport was issued, and I came to America. It was 1913.

Q: Did you like school?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: What do you remember about your schooldays?

A: I liked school, but it was far from home, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ri so it took much time to walk to school and back.

Q: Do you remember about your friends?

A: I remember a schoolmate. I met him when I went back to Japan twice.

Q: Did your parents send money to your grandmother?

A: Yes, my father sent money for us to live on.

Q: Were you the only child?

A: I had a sister a year younger than I, but she was brought up in another family.

Q: Did you meet your sister while you were in Japan?

A: I met her once or twice.



Q: Did your mother die here or in Japan?

A: She died in Japan.

Q: How old were you when your mother died?

A: I think she died when I was in 6th grade.

Q: Were you around 12 or 13 then?

A: Yes, I was around 12 or 13.

Q: What kind of a woman was your mother?

A: She was a gentle person.

Q: Have you ever been scolded by your mother?

A: I was a naughty boy, so I was scolded by her once in a while.

Q: Do you remember something special such as being scolded or praised by your mother?

A: I don't remember anything special as I was little.

Q: Have you ever become ill?

A: No, I haven't.

Q: How did you come to America?

A: When I was around 13 I wrote often to my father asking him to summon me to America. That is how I came here when I was 13 years and 9 months old.



Q: Did you want to come here?

A: Yes, I wanted to come here.

Q: Did you come here 3 years after your grandmother died?

A: I was with my gunt for 4 to 5 years as my grandmother died.

Q: Was she your aunt on father's side or mother's side?

A: She was my father's side. I left Japan when I was little, and have been living here for over 60 years.

Q: What kind of a country did you think America was before you came here?

A: America was a country which Japanese were attracted by, so I wanted to go to America. I was not the only one, but many Japanese had that kind of yearning.

Q: Where did the ship sail from?

A: I got on board the ship from Kobe, and landed at San Francisco.

Q: Did anyone take you to the ship, or did you go there alone?

A: My aunt took me to Kobe.

Q: Were you very happy to come here?

A: Yes, I was very happy as I had hopes of meeting my father and seeing America.



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Q: Did you come here alone at the age of 14?

A: My father took a picture bride, so I came here with my stepmother.

Q: Haven't your father and the stepmother never met before then?

A: It was a picture marriage. My aunt who was my father's sister acted as a go-between.

Q: Did your father go home then?

A: No, he didn't.

Q: It was the first time he saw the bride, wasn't it?

A: Of course it was, as it was the picture marriage.

Q: Was it in 1912?

A: I think it was around that time.

Q: Could you talk to your stepmother, or were you shy to talk to her?

A: Nothing happened until we got here. After we came here and 3 step-children were <sup>born</sup> we did not get along well, so when I was around 17 I became independent.

Q: Do you remember about the voyage?

A: It was a big ship called Mongolia-Go. I reme<sup>m</sup>ber about the voyage.



Q: How was it?

A: In those days the meals on the ship were Chinese food. As I was not used to it I had a hard time. They served Chinese food day after day on the ship. In those days the Chinese food on the ship was not good.

Q: Did you make friends on the ship?

A: I was young, and other passengers were grown ups, so I didn't find friends.

Q: Were there any other young passengers?

A: I was about the only young passenger.

Q: Were there other picture brides on board the ship?

A: Yes, there were many. In those days the picture marriage was popular, and there were many picture brides from Japan, but more than 50% of them were from Okinawa.

Q: Were they going to Hawaii?

A: Some of them were going to Hawaii, and some of them were coming to America.

Q: Did you get seasick?

A: Not much.



Q: Did anything interesting happen on board the ship?

A: I don't remember anything interesting happened.

Q: Did the ship go to Hawaii first?

A: It stopped at Honolulu overnight. We landed and went to a bath house and restaurant, but we came back to the ship to sleep.

Q: Where did you take a bath?

A: At a Japanese bath house in Honolulu.

Q: Did you go to Angel Island when you came to San Francisco?

A: Yes, we did. In those days they were strict about hookworms. When we had physical examination they found out that both my stepmother and I had hookworms, so we were hospitalized there for a week. We passed the test a week later.

Q: Did they give you medicine to take?

A: Yes, they did.

Q: Where did you meet your father for the first time?

A: I met him for the first time on Angel Island.

Q: How did you feel when you saw your father for the first time?

A: I was introduced to my father, so I thought he was my father.



Q: Could you call him "Otohsan" (father) right away?

A: I never saw him before, so I was not too excited. My father was more interested in his bride who came with me.

Q: How was the meeting of your father and the bride?

A: As I was a child and did not know about the adults, <sup>but</sup> I think my father was happy.

Q: Could you land after you got out of Angel Island?

A: After we were released from Angel Island we went to San Francisco by a ferry boat and landed there.

Q: What did you do after that?

A: We went to a hotel and stayed in San Francisco for about 3 days shopping for my clothes and my stepmother's dresses. We went sight-seeing for one day. Then we went to Sebastopol.

Q: What was your father doing then?

A: He was in apple drying business.

Q: Did he own the business?

A: Yes, he did. It was a small place, but he had 3 or 4 employees.

Q: How long was he in America by then?

A: I don't know the old record, but I heard that he was in Hawaii for about 5 years before he came to America. I heard that he worked on the railroad when he first came from Hawaii.



Q: Was it in San Francisco?

A: My father came to Seattle from Hawaii, and from Seattle he went to work on the railroad. When I came to America he was living at Sebastopol.

Q: What was the first impression of San Francisco when you arrived there?

A: I thought San Francisco was a beautiful place. When the ship arrived there in the dawn we went on the deck and watched the scenery. That impression is still deep in my heart.

Q: What did you think when you went to Sebastopol?

A: It was in the country, and there was nothing but apple orchards so I felt kind of lonesome when I first went there. There were no nice houses like <sup>today</sup> now, and we all lived in something like cabins. <sup>But</sup> I thought America was a nice place ever since I landed here.

Q: Did the life with your father and stepmother start there?

A: Yes, it did.

Q: What did you do there?

A: I was only 14, so about 4 or 5 days after I got there I started going to school.



Q: How was the school?

A: I didn't understand a word of English, but the white pupils were kind to me.

Q: Did you start from the first grade?

A: Yes, I did. The funny thing is, that although I was the first grader I went to the 4th grade class for math.

Q: How many years did you attend the grammar school?

A: I went there 3 winters. ~~At~~ summer time my father made me quit school to help him with apples, so I went to school only about 3 months during the winter. Even if I wanted to go to school my father didn't let me go to school so that I could help him. For 3 years I worked as a schoolboy and attended the grammar school during the winter season.

Q: Did you work as a schoolboy when you were 14?

A: Yes, when I was 14, 15 and 16 I worked as a schoolboy only in winter time.

Q: How was ~~it~~ when you lived in a white family?

A: It was not <sup>difficult</sup> ~~hard~~ when I worked hard even though I could not speak English well. The mistress loved me. I was given 50¢ spending money and went to school. Before I went to school I helped with breakfast and washed dishes if I had time. If I didn't have time



I washed dishes after I came home from school. At dinner time I set the table first and then took the food that the mistress cooked to the table. As for the housework the mistress let me clean only the kitchen. She cleaned the living room and the bedroom. I wish my father had let me go to school for 3 years during the summer too.

Q: Was your father a strict man?

A: He was quite strict. I was born in Japan and did not know the paternal love. As for my father, he did not bring me up, so he did not have much love for me. On the other hand my stepmother had 3 children one after another, so he loved them more.

Q: How old was your father then?

A: I think he was over 40 years old.

Q: About how old was your stepmother?

A: She was 32 years old when she came here with me.

Q: Did you become independent when you were 17 years old?

A: I did not get along well with my stepmother, so I lived away from home. I went to work in Sacramento, Isleton, Fresno, Lodi and all over. I carried <sup>a</sup> blanket on my back and went from one place to another doing farm labor.



Q: Did you get separated from your family?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: Didn't you feel helpless as you were only 17?

A: I didn't feel that way as I wanted to live independently without depending on my parents.

Q: How long did you continue that kind of life?

A: When I was 20 years old I got married. The girl was a sister of my father's friend. As we were friends and lived close to each other we got married.

Q: Was she in Japan then?

A: Yes, she was. Her sister was married to a man in America. As her husband was from the same town <sup>as</sup> my father, they were friends. She mentioned that she had a sister who wanted to come to America, so my father asked me if I wanted her as my bride.

Q: Did you want to get married then?

A: My father advised me to get married, but I was not too interested in getting married. I got married because of my father.

Q: Did your wife come from Japan all by herself?

A: Mine was a picture marriage, also. "Parents" made the arrangements and sent me her picture and the marriage was made up.



Q: Did you pick her up when she got here?

A: No, she came by a ship.

Q: Did you pick her up from the port?

A: I went to pick her up with her sister as I didn't know which one was my wife.

Q: How did you feel when you saw your wife for the first time?

A: I did not have bad impression.

Q: What <sup>did</sup> you say to her when you met her for the first time?

Did you call her name or did you say "Hello"?

A: Her sister introduced her to me, and she greeted me by saying, "Yoroshiku" ("Please have your favor toward me."), so I said "Yoroshiku" to her.

Q: What did you do after that?

A: I went back to Sebastopol with her. I was not living with my parents then, so I did all kinds of work by myself.

Q: What did you do at first?

A: At first I was engaged in the dehydration of apples. Later I got in poultry business.

Q: Was that business to get eggs or to raise chicken?

A: To get eggs. I think it was around 1932 or 1933. When I started the poultry business the Great Depression came., and it ended in bankrupt in 3 to 4 years.



Q: Did you get married when you were 21 years old?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: Were you in apple business for about 10 years then?

A: Yes, I was in apple business until I started the poultry business.

After I saved some money I started the poultry business. which ended in a big failure.

Q: Were you in poultry business for about 5 years?

A: About 4 years.

Q: Couldn't you sell the eggs?

A: I could sell them. The wheat was about \$1.20 to \$1.30 for 100 pounds, and the best quality eggs sold for 11¢ a dozen. Small eggs were only 6¢ a dozen. They were so cheap that it didn't pay. In those days a big piece of pork sold for about 25¢.

During the Depression there were no jobs even if you wanted to work. Those who had money in the banks could not withdraw money from the banks.

Q: When was it that you could not continue the business any more?

A: I went back to apple drying business around 1936 or 37.

Q: The Depression continued till around 1933, didn't it?

A: Yes, it continued for about 2 years.



Q: Did you continue the business during the Depression?

A: I hang on to it until I went bankrupt. When I became over head and ears in debt I went bankrupt.

Q: About how many chicken were you raising then?

A: I had around 6,000 chicken at the most.

Q: Did you hire people to help you?

A: Of course not. We were in such financial difficulties when just the family members worked.

Q: Did two of you worked?

A: We had our children who were attending grammar school to help us in the morning and in the evening. The whole family worked, but we ended in failure.

Q: How many children did you have then?

A: The youngest one was born<sup>just</sup> before we went bankrupt. The oldest is a boy, the second one is a girl and the last one is a boy. This son was born in the midst of the Depression. My business went bankrupt, but I gained this child.

Q: Did you go back to the apple drying business after you went bankrupt?

A: I did the apple drying business until the war broke out.



Around the time the war broke out I bought a house and started the apple drying business there as our children were getting bigger and I had saved some money. Then the war broke out and we had to evacuate. We went back there after the war ended.

Q: What kind of work is the apple drying business?

A: People who had orchards picked up apples which fell from the trees, put them in sacks or boxes and brought them to my place. I bought them for so much a ton, processed them, dried them and sold them. With that money I paid the employees wages and paid for the apples I bought.

Q: Did you use the machine?

A: Yes, we did. Nowadays we do everything by power machines, but in those days we used hand machine to peel and slice apples.

Q: Did you do it one at a time?

A: Yes, one at a time. After the war new machines did the work but before that we did the work by hand.

Q: Whom did you sell the dried apples to?

A: California Packing Corporation and other brokers came to buy them, so we sold the apples to them.

Q: Were they used to make pies?

A: They could be used to make pies. Much of them were shipped to Europe.



Q: What were they used for?

A: They were used for making applesauce and apple pies. As they were dehydrated they would keep for a long time. They were also used by the Army and the Navy as food as they would keep well.

Q: About how much a pound of dried apples sell for then?

A: About 12¢ a pound was the top price for the extra choice, the best grade. When it was cheap it was only about 7 to 8¢ a pound.

Q: About how many people did you hire?

A: At busy season I hired about 6 Filipinos. Besides my wife and I, children helped after school.

Q: How did you dried the apples?

A: After we peel and core the apples by machine we slice them and arrange them on trays. When the trays are full we dip them in sulphur for about 1½ to 2 hours. Then they are bleached and the harshness is removed. After that we put them in a dryer and dry them.

Q: Did it take all day to dry them?

A: We usually start <sup>working</sup> at 7 a.m. and put the trays in the dryer around 9 a.m. They are dried by 6 or 7 in the evening. If we put only one tray it would dry fast, but as we add trays of raw apples every 15 to 20 minutes the steam comes up from them and slows down the drying process. When we stop putting the raw ones in they dry faster. Around 1 or 2 a.m. we put off the fire and they are mostly dried.



Q: About how much could you dry?

A: At our place we had 4 machines. We produced about 3 to 3½ tons of dried apples a week. It depends on how juicy the apples were, but the average was 7 to 1. That is, it took 7 tons of raw apples to make a ton of dried apples.

Q: How big was the factory?

A: It was so to speak a factory. There was a place to stack the apples, a place to process apples by machines, peel and put in dryers so it took some space.

Q: About how big was it?

A: It was about 24 feet wide and 60 feet long. About half of it was the working space and the other half was to stack up raw apples. Farmers kept on bringing apples. At first we did not have them stocked, but when the season came they brought so much apples that sometimes we had to stock them outside.

Q: Around what time did you start working?

A: We usually started working at 7 a.m. and worked 10 hours, with one hour off for lunch.

Q: Were you at the factory by 7 a.m.?

A: Yes, we started working by 7 a.m.



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Q: What time did you quit working?

A: At 6 p.m.

Q: Was the fire still burning then?

A: We started the fire at 9 a.m. and put it off around 1:30 a.m.

When we had too many apples we had to work overtime as the apples would spoil. In that case we did not put off the fire till about 3:30 or 4 a.m. because it took a long time to dry when we kept on putting raw apples.

Q: Did you use gas?

A: We used oil in our place. People near the town used natural gas but we didn't have natural gas in the country in those days.

Q: How was the poultry business?

A: About 3-days old brood were brought to me after they were hatched and put in incubators. We had natural gas in Petaluma since early days, so I burned natural gas and raised the chicken.

Q: Did you raise them until they start laying eggs?

A: Yes. After I raised them in a brooder for about 3 months I moved them to a hen house.

Q: What is a brooder?

A: It is a room to raise chicks. One room is 24 feet by 24 feet. We had only 6 brooders. Some people had 14 to 16 brooders. We put about 6,000 chicks in a brooder.



Q: Did you raise them?

A: Yes. About 3 years before we quit the business they started separating the chicks by sex, but at my time male and female chicks were together. About 4 to 5 weeks old, the crest of male chicks get bigger so we can tell they are male. When they became about 3/4 pound we sold them as broilers to people who buy them. We raised the female chicks in the brooder until they were 3 months old, and then we moved them in hen house.

Q: ~~Did~~ You have to buy thousands of chickens every once in a while didn't you?

A: We had to buy replacements constantly. After about 3 years they do not produce much eggs so we have to replace them.

Q: About how often do you have to replace them?

A: Usually we did it around March. People who do the business in large scale bought new batches around July or August again. We did it about once a year in Spring buying around 3,000 chicks.

Q: Around how many eggs did they usually lay in a week?

A: It was hard to get the statistics in those days. Nowadays there are cageboards so we can tell which hen lays eggs and which does not. At my time we put 500 to 600 hens in one room, and made nests on the side of the room. If we could get 300 eggs out of 600 hen it was good.



Q: Did the hens lay eggs every day?

A: Some of them laid eggs everyday, and some every other day. We could not tell. Nowadays people who are in poultry business use cageboard so they can tell which hens do not lay eggs, and they can replace them.

Q: Did you ship about 300 eggs a day?

A: We did business in a small scale, so we sold about 3 to 4 cases a day. It was good if we could get average of 50%. That is, if we had 6,000 hens and half of it laid eggs it would have been 3,000 eggs. There were young hens that have not started laying percentage on the eggs, and there were 3 year old hens, so the average was small.

Q: How could you tell the 3 or 4 year old hens?

A: We can tell by the hen house. The first hen house would be this year's hens, the second building would be last year's and so forth. If the 4 year old hens are in the fourth building, we would take them to the market, and put new hens that we raised in that hen house.

Q: Do you kill all the hen in the hen house when they are 4 years old?

A: Brokers come to buy them, so we sell the hens to them by the current price, 14 or 15¢ a pound. Average 4 year old hens weigh 3 to 4 pounds as White Leghorns are light.



Q: Are they all white Leghorn?

A: Yes, they are all white Leghorns. They are good for laying eggs. Red chicken are good for eating.

Q: Did you get up early when you were in poultry business?

A: In that business we get up early in the morning. We get ready before the sun comes up, and by the time the sun is up we are through feeding the chicken. After that we get ready for the evening feeding or get green vegetables or grass ready for the chicken, or clean the hen house and change the water.

Q: Could you sell the birds' droppings?

A: Yes, there were people who came to buy them. I think it was sold for about \$5 a ton. Those people came to buy them with trucks, and after they processed them they took them to somewhere like Salinas to sell them as fertilizer for lettuce.

Q: How did you feel when Pearl Harbor was attacked?

A: That day we went to visit our oldest son who was in a training camp in Monterey. When we came back to Golden Gate Bridge on our way back to Sebastopol the extra was out and we were stopped, and we were evacuated to uptown in San Francisco. Later when it was cleared we went back to Sebastopol. It was so sudden that Japanese were shocked.



Q: Did you think there was going to be a war?

A: In those days we thought there might be a war judging from the reports in newspapers.

Q: Did you think danger might come to you?

A: I was shocked, but I didn't think we had to evacuate because our sons were serving in the Army and the Navy. We did not do anything but the Japanese government started the war. A West-coast commander named Dewitt said, "Jap is Jap" whether Issei or Nisei, citizen or not. I was very disappointed. Isseis are Japanese citizens, but children born here are American citizens. Nevertheless they made everybody evacuate. I think it was the idea of the American military, but the people went along with it. We were ordered to assemble at a certain place at a certain day, and we had to dispose of our houses by then. It was war so we could not help it. We were put in Merced Assembly Center.

At that time our son was in the Air Force and was stationed at Denver. He was scheduled to be shipped to Europe, so he took a 7-days furlough and visited us in the camp. Things were very contradictory then. A military policeman escorted him from the train station to our camp, but they did not let him in from the gate. I argued with the head of the camp, and finally got a permission for him to stay with us for one night. That night he stayed with us, and went back the next morning by the first train. That was very contradictory. If he was a Japanese citizen



it would have been all right to be escorted by a military policeman, but he was in uniform and yet he was treated like that because he was a Japanese descent. My son was so angry then that he was going to take his uniform off and throw it away. I don't blame him. He was shipped to Europe and was stationed at Sicily. He was a tail gunner on a bomber, and after serving 30<sup>combat</sup> missions<sup>he</sup> was discharged without getting wounded, and came back to Denver. At that time I was at Amache so he came to visit us. Nothing happened as it did at Merced then.

Q: Were you at Merced then?

A: He came to visit us first at Merced Assembly Center.

Q: What did you do with your house and the factory?

A: We loaned the factory cheap to our white neighbor. He seemed to have managed it for about a year, but as it was too much headache for him he quit after the first year. As I was not home, the Filipinos did much damage to the house.

Q: Did you leave all your furnitures in the house?

A: Yes, I left all of them. The limit was one suitcase a person so we could not take much.



Q: Didn't you store them?

A: We stored something like radios in the City Hall in Sebastopol.

We left all the machinery for the the business so that the neighbor could continue the business. But as he quit the business after a year, the Filipinos stole all the machinery.

Q: What happened to your house?

A: I rent it to a white family. We locked some furnitures in one room and rent the rest of them to the white people. While we were in the camp these people broke the lock and stole whatever they wanted.

Q: Did you know the people who rented your house?

A: I knew them. Before we came baæk I notified them when we were coming home, so the house was vacant when we came home. I don't know where they moved to.

Q: Did they steal a lot?

A: They stole the furnitures we left in the house, and moved somewhere.

Q: How did you feel when you entered Merced Assembly Center?

A: I thought we could not help it as we were ordered by the military. I was worried about my house, but I could not do anything about it. We had talent shows, and in summer time we watched young men play baseball. Everyone seemed to forget everything and lived each day happily. The life in camp was not too bad. From there we moved to Amache in Colorado.



Q: How were the barracks in Merced?

A: The barracks we were in were new. The administration office was where the racetrack used to be.

Q: Didn't it smell bad?

A: No, they weren't. Those who lived in barracks near the stable complained about the smell. As we were quite a ways from the stable it didn't smell bad.

Q: How was the food there?

A: We did not have much Japanese food in those days. They served mostly Western style food, and sometimes they cooked rice and served it. As it was hot there in summer we did not have much appetite no matter what they served. There were no fans in the camp. After we moved to Amache Relocation Center it was better. Of course it went <sup>down to</sup> 5 to 6 degrees below zero in winter and it was very cold, but we had coal stove in each room. We used nothing but coal in our camp. We cooked with coal in the kitchen and heated our quarters with coal stoves.

Q: Do you have any recollection about Amache?

A: In Amache I tried all kinds of jobs. I worked in the kitchen, worked as a garbage collector, and before I left there I worked as a policeman. I changed <sup>from</sup> one job to another, but I had fun there. Each block had their own recreation department, and some block had dance party and others showed movies. We patrolled to watch them.

Side 3



Q: What kind of troubles were there that police had to handle?

A: There were some young gangsters among the group that came from Santa Anita. They used to steal and get in fights and gave troubles all the time. As it was the police's duty to control them, we used to chase after them.

Q: Did you know who they were?

A: We knew approximately who they were. They came out at night time and made disturbance. As they were teenagers it was hard for us middle-aged men to catch them. In the meantime they would hide somewhere so we could not find them.

Q: Were there any other trouble?

A: There wasn't any other trouble in the camp besides the teenagers giving the policemen headaches. Our camp was quite a peaceful camp among all the camps. If the young men from Los Angeles did not make any disturbance it would have been a trouble-free camp. The head of the camp was a very understanding man. After the disturbance by the young men he used to go around the camp admonishing them. He handled the situations well so there wasn't hardly any trouble in the camp.

Q: Were there a question of loyalty in the camp?

A: There was not much trouble on that question in our camp. The group from Santa Anita were extremist at Poston. In our camp some Isseis wanted to be loyal to Japan, but there was no trouble caused by them. There were a few people who were pro-Japanese said wild things, but nobody was instigated by them.



Q: What other work did you do in the camp? Did you work as a garbage collector?

A: I worked as a garbage collector, a cook in the kitchen and at the end I worked as a policeman.

Q: What does a cook do?

A: Each block had a messhall, so there were 3 or 4 cooks in each block. The office made the menu, and we cooked meals according to the menu.

Q: Did you ~~cook~~ three meals a day?

A: Yes, I did. For breakfast we cooked mush or sometimes we served dry cereal or porched eggs. Once a week on Sunday mornings we served bacon and eggs.

Q: What kind of hobby did you have?

A: I did not have any particular hobby. I played neither shogi (Japanese chess) nor go (Japanese checkers).

Q: Didn't you have any recreation in the camp?

A: I played baseball with a group of old men. Young men had their team.

Q: What did your wife do?

A: She washed dishes in the next block.



Q: What kind of hobby did your wife have?

A: She did not have a special hobby, but she attended the embroidery classes and knitting in the camp.

Q: When did you leave the camp?

A: We left the camp and went to Seabrook, New Jersey in 1944. The war ended while I was working at a cannery in Seabrook, and we came back here not too long after that.

Q: What did you do at Seabrook?

A: My wife worked in the cannery cleaning peas and beans, and I worked unloading vegetables from trucks to the platform.

Q: Was it a canning company?

A: Yes, it was a cannery of Borden Company. They packed all kinds of vegetables.

Q: Were you quite strong?

A: I was healthy so it was not hard for me to unload. I had to put the vegetables in the warehouse. Half the employees were the Blacks. They were stout, so it was hard to work with them, but they helped me so there wasn't any trouble. The only trouble was that when we worked on night shift the mosquitoes bothered us. We worked 2 weeks in daytime and 2 weeks at night. We slept under the mosquito nets, but there were no mosquito nets at work.



Q: Why did many Japanese go to Seabrook?

A: They came to the camps and invited Japanese, so Japanese from all over gathered there. During the war there was <sup>a</sup> shortage of laborers so they invited Japanese from the camps. Besides Japanese there were Jamaicans working during the summer vacation, and also about 100 to 150 German prisoners of war were working at night time. All kinds of race, Germans, Jamaicans and Japanese were working there.

Q: It must have been a big place, isn't it?

A: It was a big place.

Q: About how long did you stay at Seabrook?

A: We went there around April, and left there around the last part of October and came back to Sebastopol.

Q: Why did you quit Seabrook?

A: As the war was over WRA okayed us to come back to California. Of course those who did not have a home in California could not come back unless they had guarantors in California. We had a home in California, so we could come back anytime.

When we came back the atmosphere was very bad. There was strong anti-Japanese sentiment. I felt it for the first time in my life. Of course when I was young around the time of anti-Japanese land act there was strong anti-Japanese sentiment, but one after the war was exceptional. As there was shortage of laborers our neighbor welcomed us to help him, but the white



laborers who worked there didn't want to work with "Japs". A couple of days after I started working the neighbor asked me to quit as he was afraid the white laborers might set fire on his house. I said, "That's too bad", and quit the job. When I went shopping in the town the shopkeeper asked me if I was a Filipino or a Chinese. When I told him that I was a Japanese he said, "We have nothing to sell to Japanese", and didn't sell me anything. Our neighbors were good to us, so I asked them to do some shopping for us when they went to town.

Q: Did you have some savings by then?

A: Yes, I had some.

Q: Didn't you find it hard to make a living after you came home?

A: No, I didn't find it hard to make a living for a while.

Q: Was your house paid off by then?

A: Yes, it was paid off.

Q: Did you have any other experience of being excluded?

A: As it was a small town we were treated like that for a while when we went shopping. But as the time went by the white people gradually forgot the grudge, and after 3 or 4 months we could go shopping in town without being asked what race we were. I stayed away from restaurants and movie theaters as I didn't want to be excluded by going to such places. We received much damage by the war, and for a while we felt uneasy.



Q: Did you start the business again?

A: I worked <sup>at</sup> other places for a little over a year, but when things got better I started <sup>apple</sup> ~~fruits~~ drying business again. Although I started the apple drying business again, things were not the same as before the war, because during the war the co-ops were made in local areas and it became hard for the individuals to buy apples. When we went around to buy apples, people would tell us that they were members of co-ops so they could not sell us apples. There were so many co-ops that Japanese could not buy apples, and we became extinct. Then Japanese people changed trades, and some became gardeners and some became vegetable farmers as we could not make living on apple drying business. For 2 to 3 years I worked as a dryman of a co-op. As there was a shortage of laborers the anti-Japanese sentiment was weakened. Japanese had experience, so the co-ops hired Japanese.

By the time I reached the retiring age I was working as a gardener in Santa Rosa which was about 7 miles from my home. I was healthy so I could still work, but as my wife was sickly we moved to San Diego.

Q: How was San Diego?

A: It is a good place for retired people as the weather is good. Japanese seniors organized Meiji-Kai and went on trips to such places as Las Vegas and Los Angeles to entertain ourselves.



Q: Your wife passed away, didn't she?

A: Yes, she died on the 9th of this month.

Q: You miss her, don't you?

A: I am filled with deep emotion. I feel sorry she was sickly.

Had she been healthy she would have spent her old age happily.

Q: How old was she when she passed away?

A: She was 77, a year younger than I.

Q: You went through hardships together for many years, didn't you?

A: We lived together for 58 years. As our children all grew up to be able to support themselves she died without worries.

Q: As an Issei, what do you want to teach Sanseis and young people?

A: Niseis can understand Japanese a little, but Sanseis around here do not understand a word of Japanese. May be it could not be helped, but 3rd and 4th generation Chinese speak Chinese just like their Isseis do. I envy them. There is nothing more inconvenient than being unable to understand my grandchildren and great grandchildren. I am not the only one, but all the Isseis wish that they could speak a little conversational Japanese. It may be impossible as Japanese may be harder than Chinese or Spanish languages. I don't understand if they are ashamed to speak Japanese or if it is too hard for them to learn.



Q: Some Sanseis are very aware of being Japanese? Do you think it is good?

A: Of course, it is good. I will be satisfied if they are aware of being Japanese even if they do not speak Japanese.

Q: Do you have anything else you want to tell the young people?

A: I don't have anything else to tell them. The only problem is the language. It is a lonely feeling when you cannot understand each other. I can understand about half of what my grandchildren say to me, but when I answer them they cannot understand me as my pronunciation is not good. Then my grandchildren ask their parents what I said.

Q: Do you understand English well?

A: I don't understand English too well. I went to school, a little so I can understand a little better than Japanese who just got here. I went to school only for 3 winters just to learn how to pronounce some words, so I asked to be put in the first grade every time I changed schools.

Q: Looking back, when was the hardest time in your life?

A: That was during the war. My son <sup>w</sup>ent into service, and we were put in a camp. The barracks were uncomfortable, but the camp itself was not uncomfortable as people in it were all Japanese.



When we came home we were excluded. Even if we had money they did not sell us goods because we were Japanese. Those were the hardest experiences. As you know, Japanese could acquire American citizenship because of the distinguished service of the 442nd Regiment. We were given rights to vote, so I have been voting till now. I am thankful that we could acquire our citizenship because the men of the 442nd Regiment sacrificed their lives.

Q: What is your oldest son doing now?

A: He is working as a gardener in Pasadena.

Q: What about the second one?

A: The second one is a daughter, and she lives next door to us. She owned a liquor store for about 15 years, but she sold it last year. Her husband was shot by a hold-up and hovered over life and death, so they quit the business. His life was spared, so he is going to school to be a travel agent.

Q: Is Micky attending the State College?

A: He has been working for the State since he graduated from the college in San Francisco. I think he has been working for the State for around 17 to 18 years.

Q: Do you have any other recollections?

A: After I retired I am leaving everything to take its own course.